

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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O R 241526Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8869
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5087

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: POVEDA AND NAVY HOLDING FIRM ON CLEAN ELECTION

1. THE EMBASSY HAS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM SEVERAL SOURCES INDICATING THE INTENTION OF GOE SUPREME COUUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT ADMIRAL POVEDA AND OTHER NAVY LEADERS TO ASSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN, THE UNOFFICIAL SECOND-PLACE FINISHER IN THE JULY 16 ELECTION, ARRANGED A MEETING WITH CHARGE CORR ON JULY 20 IN WHICH HE RELATED A CONVERSATION THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN POVEDA AND A DURAN-BALLEN CONFIDANT OVER DINNER ON JULY 18. POVEDA, WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE GOE'S REACTION TO THE ELECTION RESULTS, POPURTEDLY GAVE AN EMOTIONAL RECOUNTING OF HIS UNANTICIPATED RISE FROM AN UNAMBITIOUS TAILOR'S SON TO NAVY ADMIRAL, TO PRESIDENTOF ECUADOR. HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS POVEDA CONTINUED, HAVE EXCEEDED HIS WILDEST DREAMS. HE SEES THE RETORNO AS HIS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT, AND HE WOULD NOT
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WANT TO STAIN HIS HONOR BY INTERFERING AT THIS POINT WITH ITS SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION.

2. FROM TWO SOURCES, FRANCISCO (PANCHO) HUERTA AND MAURICIO DAVALOS (POPULAR DEMOCRACY/CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT LEADER), THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT POVEDA MET WITH RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA AND HIS SON REINALDO HUERTA ON JULY 19, WITH THE ELDER

HUERTA PROBING POVEDA ON THE GOE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE OUTCOME OF THE FIRST ROUND OF VOTING. IN PANCHO HUERTA'S ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING, POVEDADISPLAED NO INTEREST IN PROMOTING RAUL CLEMENTE'S CHANCES AND URGED HIM TO RELAX AND AWAIT THE OFFICIAL ELECTION RETURNS. DAVALOS CONTENTED THAT RAUL CLEMENTE HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE RUNOFF ELECTION, BUT ONLY IF HE COULD BE GUARANTEED VICTORY. POVEDA SUPPOSEDLY MADE NO COMMITMENT IN RESPONSE TO THIS BRAZEN PITCH FOR GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE.

3. CHARGE SPOKE WITH REAL ADMIRAL VICTOR HUGO GARCE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POVEDA'S CLOSET COLLEAGUE, ABOUT THE ELECTORAL SITUATION ON JULY 21. GARCES EXPRESSED PLEASURE ABOUT THE HONEST AND EFFICIENT MANNER IN WHICH THE FIRST ROUND HAD BEEN HELD, BUT ADDED THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAD BEEN DISMAYED BY VICTORY OF THE ROLDOS/HURTADO TICKET. HOWEVER, GARCES STRESS THAT ARMED FORCES HAD COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE RETURN PROCESS AND WOULD RESPECT FULLY THE PEOPLE'S WISHES. ASKED ABOUT THE SECOND PLACE RUN-OFF POSITION, GARCES REVEALED THAT HE HAD BEEN PRIVY TO THE RESULTS OF THE TABULATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL VOTING TABLE CERTIFICATES AND INDICATED THAT THEY FAVORED DURAN BALEN BY A NARROW MARGIN. IF THIS HELD UP THROUGH THE ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL SCRUTINY, WHICH HE EXPECTED, THE ARMED FORCES WOULD RESPECT THE RESULT. AT ANY RATE, GARCES BELIEVED THAT ROLDOS WOULD WIN IN THE SECOND ROUND REGARDLESS OF HIS OPPONENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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GARCES SAID THAT HE DISTRUSTED THE CFP, DID NOT KNOW ROLDOS VERY WELL, AND WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE A MEETING TO TALK. NVERTHELESS, THE MILITARY WOULD RESPECT THE RESULTS, HE REPEATED.

4. IN OTHER SOUNDINGS AMONG THE ADMIRALS, VICE ADMIRAL OLMEDO (WHO MAY BE FOISTED ON ROLDOS AS HIS MINISTER OF DEFENSE) REITERATED TO EMBOFFS HIS SUSPICION OF ROLDOS AND HURTADO, BUT STATED FLATLY THAT THE MILITARY WOULD NOT INTERVENE AGAINST THE PEOPLE'S WISHES. HE EXPRESSED A STRONG DESIRE TO MEET WITH ROLDOS AND EXCHANGE VIEWPOINTS, NOT ONLY TO SEEK REASSURANCES FROM ROLDOS ABOUT HIS POLICIES AND ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ARMED FORCES, BUT ALSO TO ATTEMPT TO CONVEY SOME UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE ARMED FORCES TO ROLDOS. NEVERTHELESS, OLMEDO REMARKED THAT HE HAD HAD KNOWN BUCARAM SNCE 1949 AND DID NOT FEEL THAT HE COULD EVER TRUST HIM.

5. OTHER NAVY LEADERS SEEM MORE SYMPATHETIC TO ROLDOS. READ ADMIRAL RAUL SORROSA, NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF AND ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED VOICES IN THE SERVICE, HAS TOLD EMBASSY'S MLO CHIEF TWICE IN PAST WEEK THAT HE KNOWS ROLDOS QUITE WELL, LIKES AND RESPECTS HIM, AND BELIEVES THAT HE WOULD BRING GOOD

GOVERNMENT TO ECUADOR. SIMILARLY, CAPT. EDISON RUIZ, HEAD OF THE MERCHANT MARINE, TOLD EMBOFF ON JULY 5 THAT HE HAD LISTENED TO ROLDOS' REMARKS THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN AND WAS VERY IMPRESSED. HE THOUGHT THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE AND WORTHY OF SUPPORT BY THE MILITARY.

6. COMMENT: WHILE THE ARMY, BY VIRTUE OF ITS SIZE, WILL BE THE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN ESTABLISHING THE DEFINITIVE MILITARY ATTITUDE TOWARD ROLDOS, THE NAVY ATTITUDE IS HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL. THE NAVY HAS BACKUP PUBLIC ORDER RESPONSIBILITIES IN GUAYAQUIL AND WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO CONFRONT ANY POPULAR UPSWING IN THE CFP STRONGHOLD WHICH OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF AN ATTEMPT TO BLOCK ROLDOS. MOREOVER, NAVY PERSONNEL SPEND HALF THEIR CAREERS IN GUAYAQUIL AND THEREFORE HAVE HAD

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MORE PERSONAL CONTACT WITH BUCARAM, ROLDOS, AND THE CFP. WHILE THIS CAN CUT BOTH WAYS, THERE MAY BE MORE SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THE ROLDOS PHENOMENON WITHIN THE NAVY THAN WITHIN THE OTHER TWO SERVICES. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN IS THE MOST DANGEROUS ELEMENT IN THIS EQUATION AND THE NAVY, AT LEAST, KNOWS MORE ABOUT IT THAN THE OTHERS.
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